1: Ingrams G-5 (1934-35)1936 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

mean that his position *vis à vis* the Confederation is wholly negligible. The influence that an individual ruler exerts over a confederation of tribesmen depends to a large extent on the personality of the individual and I found plenty of evidence that Sultan 'Ali bin Mansur is universally respected, admired, and held in affection amongst the Shenafir tribesmen. Even though his word is not universally law his services are much sought in mediation between different factions, and there is no lack of factions in the Confederation. Along the length of the valley from the east of Shibam to the east of Tarim, which is considered Kathīri, village after village is a small city-state on its own. It is difficult to pass from one to another, even now that the motor-car has come, without the traditional *siyar* or escort.

Typical of the situation has been the state of war that has existed for some time between the Āl 'Umar and Āl 'Amr clans. They have centred round the respectably-sized town of Al Ghurfa between Shibam and Seiyun. Five or six years ago some of the tribesmen of the Āl 'Umar started interfering with the inhabitants of Al Ghurfa. Bin 'Abdat, the *'aqīl* of the Āl 'Amr, protested to Salim bin Ja'fer, the *'aqīl* of the Āl 'Umar, and proposed that they should unite to make peace in Al Ghurfa. Hitherto disputes in the town were commonly referred to the settlement of one Sheikh Bā Abūd, but this arrangement appears to have broken down. Bin 'Abdat informed Bin Ja'fer that if he would not help him, he (Bin 'Abdat) would establish control in the town himself. As Bin Ja'fer did not give him support he took action himself and established order. The new state of affairs was not popular, and probably resulted in some further disorder which had its repercussions beyond local limits. At this juncture the Qu'aiti *wazir* came to Shibam and brought pressure on Sultan 'Ali bin Mansur to unite with him and Salim bin Ja'fer in compelling Bin 'Abdat to vacate Al Ghurfa, and retire to his original place outside. Sultan 'Ali bin Mansur marched against Bin 'Abdat with one gun and some troops; Seiyid Hussein, the Qu'aiti *wazir*, also brought a gun and some troops from Shibam, Salim bin Ja'fer brought his own men, and the three forces collected at Al Ghiyel. The town of Al Ghurfa was bombarded, and, as it was described to me, " they had a good battle but without success ".

Seiyid Hussein, the *wazir*, retired after having successfully complicated the issue, and Sultan 'Ali immediately followed suit, leaving Bin 'Abdat and Bin Ja'fer to fight it out together. Both sides entrenched themselves. The elaborate system of fortifications and communication trenches, still visible at Al Ghurfa, reminded me strongly of France. They extend over nearly a mile, and in this small patch of the valley both sides lived an uncomfortable life for several years. Any cultivation that was done was done under difficulties, and the fields could only be approached through trenches. Salim bin Ja'fer enlivened the proceedings by importing a sort of armoured car from Java. This is now derelict

tendency to fire high. Tactics are simple, usually an advance in strength or the investment or defence of small forts or houses. Any more complicated manœuvre involving strict timing or detailed concerted action would be beyond their capacity at present. They are difficult to control in action, and in the heat of the moment tend to forget their training and to expose themselves by not making use of ground and cover, but as their potential opponents suffer from the same faults this is not so serious as it would be against more experienced troops. The Bedouin does not favour night-fighting, but he is expert at moving and taking up position in the dark. He is willing to follow his officers, and has particular faith in those from the Arab Legion, who in simple fashion he believes must be more competent, as they have been brought in from another country. The same would apply to British officers, provided they understood his language and customs and accurately gauged his capabilities. Unless equipped with this knowledge, however, a British officer would find the Bedouin soldier awkward to handle and disappointing in action.

By showing promise and industry the soldier will gain promotion or can become a specialist such as wireless operator or armourer. At present the highest rank reached by any is lieutenant; owing to lack of experience, knowledge, and background, they are not yet suitable for higher rank, but in time this will be overcome. Part of the remedy may result from the foundation a few years ago of a Bedouin boys' school in Mukalla. This worth-while enterprise, sponsored and paid for by His Majesty's Government, is of considerable interest, and it is anticipated that ex-pupils will not only help to fill the ranks of H.B.L. with good material, but that others, encouraged to further education, will become much-needed Government servants, teachers and leaders in other walks of life.

There is a cadre of men who have voluntarily remained in the H.B.L. for longer periods, but after four years or so the average soldier, unless he has attained rank, will retire. He may ask that his place be taken by his brother or cousin, as he has liked the life, and his length of voluntary service speaks for itself. On his return to his tribe he will be an asset to Government, and his understanding and experience will be of help to political officers or other Government servants who may have dealings with his tribe or work to perform in his area. There is no reserve. The Bedouin in the Protectorate dislikes being tied down to a period of time, and a reserve as understood in a European army would be impossible to administer or co-ordinate. But in an emergency many ex-soldiers would return for temporary service if strongly requested.

Whatever the future may hold, there is no doubt that the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion performs useful tasks at low costs. It is in no sense planned as a national army, but in its military and political rôles has fully justified itself. One hopes that its ties with the Arab Legion will not be broken and that in the years to come it will attain the prestige and success in its own area which the Arab Legion enjoys in the Arab world as a whole.

I am indebted to Major I. E. Snell, Royal Sussex Regiment, at present seconded as Military Adviser to the British Agent, Mukalla, for certain facts and technical details used in this article.